

Why Should I see a Physical Therapist for Dizziness?

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Patient Fact Sheet

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If you are dizzy or off balance, you may have an inner ear problem, also called a **vestibular** disorder. Many people with inner ear damage limit activity or avoid moving around because moving can make dizziness feel worse. Activities that were simple before the vestibular disorder may become difficult and cause fatigue, frustration and anxiety. You may feel like it is difficult to focus your vision. These issues are all typical with an inner ear problem. Some physical therapists are specially trained to help improve the symptoms of dizziness and improve balance.

Physical therapists (PTs) can help you learn how to gradually increase your movement so that you feel less dizzy over time. PTs can help make your balance better using exercise. When you start moving again with the help of your physical therapist, your dizziness should improve. Performing your normal activities and physical exercise can also help you reach your goals. If specific activities or chores around the house cause you to feel off balance, you will learn how to do them safely. Your PT can help you understand how to pace yourself so that you can control your dizziness better.

You will be given exercises depending on what problems the PT finds on your first visit. Exercises will help to improve your balance, help you feel better when you move around, and help you see more clearly when you move your head. In addition, general exercises including walking outdoors are often prescribed to improve overall physical health and endurance.

It is important to start your therapy as soon as your physician refers you to a PT. The brain and inner ear system recover best in the first few months after the vestibular system is damaged.